

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
ACDA-12 IO-13 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02 DOE-15
CEQ-01 TRSE-00 /129 W
-----070602 101547Z /47
P 101512Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0222

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 07259

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, UR, US
SUBJECT: PROPOSED REPLY TO SOVIET LETTER TO PRESIDENT
ON RB/ER WEAPON

REF: MOSCOW 04851

1. WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL DECISION ON THE
RB/ER WEAPON, EMBASSY FEELS TIME HAS COME TO
RESPOND TO LETTER OF 31 SOVIET SCIENTISTS SENT TO THE
PRESIDENT ON MARCH 13. SOVIETS HAVE MOUNTED A CONTINUING
PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE RB/ER WEAPON WHICH
SHOULD BE ANSWERED AND EMBASSY IS CONVINCED THAT ONE OF
THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ANSWER THIS CAMPAIGN IS
LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR TO SOVIET SIGNATORIES OF LETTER
TO THE PRESIDENT. WE PROPOSE TO SEND THE LETTER CONTAINED
IN PARAGRAPHS TWO THROUGH SEVEN OF REFTEL WITH THE
SUBSTITUTION OF NEW LANGUAGE FOR PARAGRAPH THREE REFTEL
AND WITH THE ADDITION OF A FINAL SENTENCE TO PARAGRAPH
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SEVEN OF REFTEL. WE THEREFORE NOW PROPOSE FOLLOWING TEXT:

2. BEGIN TEXT. THE LETTER WHICH YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES
SENT TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON MARCH 13 POINTS UP THE NEED
FOR INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE QUESTION
OF THE ENHANCED RADIATION, REDUCED BLAST WEAPON - THE
SO-CALLED NEUTRON BOMB. THE UNITED STATES WELCOMES THE

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATING TO NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS AND TO CONVEY THE DEEP CONCERN FELT BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ON THE QUESTION OF THE CONTROL OF ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

3. AS YOU ARE AWARE, PRESIDENT CARTER ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 7 THAT HE INTENDS TO DEFER PRODUCTION OF THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON. PRESIDENT CARTER FURTHER ANNOUNCED THAT THE DECISION REGARDING THE INCORPORATION OF ENHANCED RADIATION FEATURES INTO OUR BATTLEFIELD WEAPONS WILL BE MADE LATER AND WILL BE INFLUENCED BY THE DEGREE OF RESTRAINT SHOWN BY YOUR GOVERNMENT IN ITS ARMAMENTS PROGRAMS AFFECTING THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES AND WESTERN EUROPE. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE OCCASION OFFERED BY YOUR LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT TO EXPLAIN TO YOU THE POSITION OF MY GOVERNMENT ON THIS WEAPON AND, IN SO DOING, TO DESCRIBE THE AREAS OF CONCERN WHICH THE PRESIDENT HOPES WILL BE ADDRESSED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN THIS MATTER. THE PRESIDENT HAS OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RESTRAINT AND I HOPE THAT HIS STATEMENT ON THIS MATTER WILL RECEIVE YOUR MOST CAREFUL STUDY.

4. YOU STATE IN YOUR LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER THAT THE REDUCED BLAST, ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON IS "NOT A DEFENSIVE WEAPON." IT IS, IN FACT, A DEFENSIVE WEAPON
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AND THE UNITED STATES IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING UNDERTAKING ITS MANUFACTURE AND SUBSEQUENT DEPLOYMENT IN ORDER TO MEET KEENLY-FELT DEFENSIVE NEEDS. AS YOU KNOW, WARSAW PACT FORCES CURRENTLY ENJOY A THREE-TO-ONE ADVANTAGE OVER NATO FORCES IN THE NUMBER OF TANKS IN CENTRAL EUROPE. THIS HUGE DISPARITY HAS EVOKED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN ON THE PART OF OUR DEFENSE PLANNERS, WHO SEE IN ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS A MEANS TO CORRECT THIS INBALANCE.

5. IN EXPLAINING THIS SITUATION, LET ME EMPHASIZE THAT NEITHER THE PRESIDENT NOR ANY OTHER RESPONSIBLE FIGURE IN THE WEST ASSERTS THAT THESE WEAPONS ARE "HUMANE," AS IS SOMETIMES ALLEGED IN YOUR PRESS. ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE BRUTALLY DESTRUCTIVE AND THEIR USE WOULD CAUSE GREAT HUMAN SUFFERING. THE DESTRUCTIVENESS OF ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS, HOWEVER, IS CONSIDERABLY MORE CONCENTRATED THAN THAT OF OTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THUS, TO ACHIEVE THE SAME ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY OF AN ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON, A STANDARD NUCLEAR WEAPON WOULD HAVE TO BE ROUGHLY TEN TIMES AS POWERFUL AND WOULD BE THAT MANY MORE TIMES DESTRUCTIVE OF SURROUNDING URBAN AND

RURAL AREAS. WHILE HARDLY HUMANE, THIS WEAPON ACHIEVES DEFENSIVE PURPOSES WITH FAR LESS COLLATERAL DAMAGE.

6. THIS LEADS ME TO ADDRESS A SECOND ASPECT OF YOUR LETTER. YOU STATE AT ONE POINT THAT ANY USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS MAY LEAD TO TOTAL WAR AND AT ANOTHER POINT YOU ASSERT THAT THE REDUCED BLAST, ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON LOWERS THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS FULLY AWARE OF HIS GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY IN WEIGHING THE CHOICE TO USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. MOREOVER, I NOTE THAT YOUR ATTENTION HAS BEEN DIRECTED AT MERELY ONE OF SEVERAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH COULD BE APPLIED IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER. YOUR APPEAL WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CONFIDENTIAL

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PERSUASIVE IF YOU HAD ALSO ADDRESSED OTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH ARE ALREADY BEING DEPLOYED. I HAVE IN

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0223

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 07259

MIND IN PARTICULAR THE SOVIET SS-20 MISSILE, A MOBILE, MULTI--ARHEAD MISSILE OF GREAT DESTRUCTIVENESS CAPABLE

OF STRIKING ANY TARGET IN EUROPE. THE SOVIET UNION HAS DEPLOYED THIS MISSILE IN LARGE NUMBERS, AND IT IS CONSIDERABLY MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN THE PROPOSED REDUCED BLAST, ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON. AS PRESIDENT CARTER SAID WHILE IN WARSAW ON DECEMBER 30, WE CONSIDER THE SS-20 MISSILE TO BE MUCH MORE DESTABILIZING THAN THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON.

7. WE BELIEVE THAT TO DIRECT ENORMOUS ATTENTION AT A SINGLE NUCLEAR WEAPON, AND ONE OF TACTICAL, DEFENSIVE APPLICATION AT THAT, IS TO Demean THE VITAL OBJECTIVE OF CONTROLLING ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IN CONCLUSION, THEN, LET ME REITERATE THE PERSONAL INTEREST OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AND TO URGE YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES TO WORK WITH US TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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DECISION OF PRESIDENT CARTER OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BOTH OUR COUNTRIES TO MOVE CLOSER TO THIS GOAL AND I URGE YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES TO RAISE YOUR INFLUENTIAL VOICES WITHIN YOUR GOVERNMENT IN SUPPORT OF A PROGRAM OF RESTRAINT AS THE PRESIDENT HAS PROPOSED. END TEXT.

8. UPON DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL EMBASSY PROPOSES TO SEND THIS LETTER TO THE SOVIET SCIENTISTS AND TO RELEASE IT TO THE PRESS. TOON

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